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ABSTRACT

The Creighton Research Institute, in answer to a legislative mandate, addressed four objectives in conducting this needs assessment of Indians residing in Nebraska in 1977: (1) estimating their statewide population, (2) describing social and economic characteristics, (3) determining their needs, and (4) documenting the services and programs available to them. Background interviews were conducted with 18 Indian leaders and 13 government officials, and extensive interviews were held with a sample of 292 American Indians. For the estimated 15,205 population, the unemployment rate was 14%, almost 5 times that of the statewide rate; their average income was less than 60% of all Nebraskans in 1975. Household size was significantly larger, but their rate of homeownership was only 25%, with homes and apartments being small and crowded. More than one third of the persons interviewed had been arrested, with the most common offenses being alcohol-related; drinking problems were reported in 21% of the households surveyed. Nebraska Indians were less likely to seek medical help from available sources, and they had generally received less formal education than all Nebraskans, yet education and health were perceived by the Native Americans to be their two most significant areas of need. (JD)

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Executive Summary of the Final Report:

A Needs Assessment of Native Americans in Nebraska

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

of the

FINAL REPORT: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN NEBRASKA

This *Executive Summary* was prepared by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The *Final Report* was prepared by the Creighton Institute for Business, Law and Social Research, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

January, 1979

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The Eighty-fifth Legislature, acting at the close of its First Session, directed the Department of Economic Development to contract for a "Needs assessment for and of the American Indian population of Nebraska." Utilizing an interagency advisory committee to help formulate the request-for-proposals as well as appropriate selection criteria, the Department oversaw a rigorous process to determine the proposal which both demonstrated the most thorough understanding of the difficulties implicit in a study of this nature, and offered the greatest possibility of successfully overcoming those problems in order to provide the desired information. The contract was awarded to the Creighton Institute for Business, Law, and Social Research.

The legislative mandate contained in LB 532 clearly evidenced the will of a majority of the unicameral to counter speculation with fact in future discussions of the issues and concerns facing Native Americans residing in Nebraska. The bill specified that the study to be performed would include the "determination of (1) the current employment and employment opportunities of Nebraska Indians; (2) the health of and the health care facilities and support services available and unavailable to Nebraska Indians; (3) the education of Nebraska Indians; (4) the educational institutions and programs providing services to Nebraska Indians; (5) any demonstratable lack of educational institutional accessibility or lack of educational services and opportunities; and (6) the housing adequacies and inadequacies facing Nebraska Indians." This executive summary is designed to make the major findings of the study as well as a portion of the supporting data easily accessible in a format which mirrors the legislation. It is not intended to discourage persons from reading the study itself and gaining their own insights from the myriad of information ably presented there.

For the sake of convenient reference, there follows a listing of the Study's most significant findings:

. . . The number of American Indians in Nebraska in 1977 was estimated to be 15,205. This is more than twice the number reported in the 1970 Census.

. . . Using the Department of Labor's definition of unemployment, the unemployment rate of Nebraska Indians, at 14 percent, was almost five times that of the State as a whole.

. . . The average household income of Nebraska Indians in 1977 was less than 60 percent of the average household income of all Nebraskans in 1975. Moreover, the average household size of Nebraska Indians was found to be significantly higher than that of all Nebraskans.

. . . While there are few significant differences between other Nebraskans and Nebraska Indians in terms of their illnesses and accident rate, Nebraska Indians are less likely to consult a doctor about their illnesses or to see the same doctor on repeat visits.

. . . Drinking problems were reported in 21 percent of the Nebraska Indian households surveyed for this study.

. . . Nebraska Indians have, on the average, received less formal education than all Nebraskans and are less satisfied with their educations than other Nebraskans. Native American parents were particularly concerned about the lack of Indian teachers and administrators in their children's schools and about the teacher's lack of understanding of the Indian culture.

. . . The rate of homeownership among Nebraska Indians is quite low—25 percent compared with 67 percent for all Nebraskans.

. . . The homes and apartments in which Nebraska Indians live are fairly small. This fact, coupled with the fairly large average size of Indian households indicates that many Nebraska Indian homes are more crowded than other Nebraskans' homes.

. . . More than a third of the persons interviewed for this study had been arrested. Most commonly their arrest was based on an alcohol-related offense.

. . . Education and health were perceived by Native Americans in Nebraska to be their two most important areas of need.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Creighton Research Institute addressed four major objectives in conducting this needs assessment of Indians in Nebraska: to estimate the population of Indians in Nebraska; to delineate the social and economic characteristics of Nebraska Indians; to determine the needs of Nebraska Indians; and to document the services and programs available to Native Americans living in Nebraska. In an attempt to meet the information needs of the Nebraska Legislature, the various State agencies, and Nebraska Indian leaders, data were obtained for the entire Nebraska Indian population and for the urban, small town/rural, and reservation subpopulations.

A two-phase research plan was employed, incorporating both in-depth background interviews with Native American and State agency spokespersons and extensive interviews with a sample of Nebraska Indians. Background interviews were conducted with 18 Nebraska Indian leaders and with 13 federal, state, and local officials during March and April, 1978.

A sample of two hundred and ninety-two American Indians were personally interviewed during April, May, June, and July 1978. All of the interviews were conducted by Native Americans and by a former VISTA volunteer, all of whom were trained in interviewing techniques by Research Institute staff.

Indian Participation in the Study

Since this project was to be a needs assessment "for" Nebraska Indians, a variety of techniques were used to insure Indians participation in the study. Native American spokespersons throughout the State were interviewed to obtain their perceptions of their people's status and most critical needs of their people. In addition, group meetings were hosted by the Institute at the Santee reservation and in Lincoln and Omaha. The third tactic for increasing Indian participation in the study involved the use of public service announcements. During the month of June, announcements were broadcast on radio stations throughout the State to inform the Indian population of the study and to invite them to mail or telephone their comments to the Research Institute. This tactic, however, proved unsuccessful as no comments were received. The final technique for insuring Indian participation was the use of Native American interviewers.

THE POPULATION ESTIMATES

As noted earlier, one of the major study objectives was the development of population estimates of Native Americans in Nebraska. However, it is important to note that the study was not intended to be a systematic census of the Indian population in Nebraska.

Since there is no commonly accepted definition of an American Indian, the Creighton Institute elected to use a hybrid definition. For purposes of this study, an American Indian was defined as an individual who: (1) was enrolled on a tribal enrollment list; (2) was not enrolled but qualified by virtue of his Indian ancestry (i.e., one-quarter or more Indian blood); and (3) identified himself as an American Indian.

The population estimate was derived from the following sources: (1) background interviews with Native American and State agency spokesperson; (2) responses from city clerks in every Nebraska city that had an Indian population recorded in the 1970 Census; and (3) reports of previous research. On the basis of figures drawn from these sources, the Institute estimated the American Indian population in Nebraska to be 15,205.

Of the total 15,205 Native Americans living in Nebraska, it was estimated that 5,922 were living in urban areas (Lincoln and Omaha), 2,787 were living in other towns and rural areas, and 3,200 were living on the three reservations in the State. In addition, the number of transient Indians in the State was estimated to number 3,712 and the number of Indians bearing Spanish surnames (Hispanics) was estimated to be 684. Table 1 shows the number and percent of Indians living in each geographic area of the State.

TABLE 1

POPULATION ESTIMATE OF AMERICAN INDIANS IN NEBRASKA

Area	Number	Percent
Urban		
Lincoln (Lancaster Co.)	1,446	9.5
Omaha (Douglas Co.)	4,476	29.4
TOTAL	5,922	38.9
Small Town/Rural		
Panhandle Counties	1,343	8.8
Other counties	1,444	9.5
TOTAL	2,787	18.3
Reservation		
Santee Sioux	450	2.9
Winnebago	1,150	7.6
Omaha	1,600	10.5
TOTAL	3,200	2.1
Transients	2,712	17.8
Hispanics	584	3.8
TOTAL FOR STATE	15,205	100.0

Source: Creighton Institute for Business, Law and Social Research *Final Report: A Needs Assessment of Native Americans in Nebraska*, November 1978.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

During the background interviews with Native Americans and others, the Creighton researchers were told that Nebraska Indians frequently encounter serious problems in attempting to find and keep satisfying, well-paying jobs. Cited as obstacles to employment were: (1) alcohol-related problems, (2) a lack of understanding of the Indian culture and personality among employers, (3) the lack of education of the Indian people, and (4) prejudice against Native Americans on the part of employers.

More than half (55 percent) of all the Nebraska Indians interviewed for this study were working, with 43 percent working full-time and 12 percent working part-time. Of the remaining respondents, 18 percent were keeping house, 14 percent were unemployed, five percent were retired, four percent were in school, two percent were disabled, and one percent was temporarily away from work.

While the unemployment rate among American Indians in Nebraska is considerably lower than the figures cited by the background sources, it is high enough to indicate that a serious unemployment problem exists among Nebraska Indians, particularly when compared with the statewide unemployment rate. Using the Department of Labor's definitions to calculate unemployment, the "official" unemployment rate for Nebraska Indians is slightly more than 14 percent. This compares with a statewide unemployment rate of 3.1 percent for the same period of time. The unemployment rate of Nebraska Indians, in other words, is almost five times that of the state as a whole. Moreover, most of the respondents who were working part-time said they would like to work fulltime.

Another employment-related topic explored in the study was the occupations of Nebraska Indians. When asked what kind of work they normally did, a majority of the working respondents listed jobs which can be classified as blue collar. Over one-fourth of the Native Americans said they had jobs which can be classified as "laborer." Fourteen percent of the respondents can be characterized as "service workers," eleven percent as "craftsmen," and eight percent as "semi-skilled workers." About one-third of the respondents indicated that they had jobs which can be classified as white-collar jobs—professionals or semi-professionals, managers and administrators, and clerks or salespersons.

The Nebraska Indians surveyed for this study were asked about the kinds of problems they encountered in attempting to find and keep jobs. Four problems were identified by nearly half of the respondents: low pay; lack of skills; lack of education; and prejudice against Native Americans. Slightly less than a third of Nebraska Indians interviewed reported that they experienced tardiness, absenteeism, or alcohol-related problems on their jobs. While this figure is less than estimated by the background sources, it still indicates a serious employment problem for Nebraska Native Americans.

Financial Characteristics

Closely related to the employment characteristics of Nebraska Native Americans are their financial characteristics. To determine these characteristics, respondents were asked several questions about the amount and sources of their incomes, as well as about the kinds and amount of debts they had.

Data on the income of Nebraska Indians in the survey are shown in Table 2. As the table reveals, 14 percent of the respondents reported that the combined income of the members of their households was less than $3,000 and an additional 26 percent said that it was between $3,000 and $5,999. Only 15 percent, on the other hand, had household incomes of from $12,000 to 19,999, and only five percent earned more than $20,000.

TABLE 2

NEBRASKA INDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1977

Household Income	Percent	Number from Interview Sample
Less than $3,000	14%	(36)
$3,000-5,999	26	(67)
$6,000-8,999	23	(58)
$9,000-11,999	17	(43)
$12,000-19,999	15	(37)
$20,000 or more	5	(12)
TOTAL	100%	(253)

The mean or average, household income of Nebraska Indian households in 1977 is compared with the mean income for all Nebraskans in Table 3. As shown, the average household income of Nebraska Indians in 1977 was less than 60 percent of the average household income of all Nebraskans in 1975 (the latest comparable information). Moreover, the average household size of Nebraska Indians at 3.5 is significantly higher than that of all Nebraskans at 2.8; thus Nebraska Indians support larger households with less money than other Nebraskans.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF THE EMPLOYMENT/FINANCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NEBRASKA INDIANS

Characteristic	Nebraska Indians	Nebraskans
Unemployment Rate	14%	3% (1978)[a]
Household Income		
Under $5,000	32%	19%[b]
$5,000-$9,999	38	22
$10,000-$14,999	19	21
$15,000-$19,999	7	16
$20,000-$24,999	4	10
$25,000 or more	1	11
TOTAL	101%	99%
MEAN INCOME	$7,965	$13,891

[a] Nebraska Department of Labor.
[b] Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, "Household Money Income in 1975, by Housing Tenure and Residence, for the U.S., Regions, Divisions, and States, 1975," Series P-60, No. 108, November 1977.

Other financial topics addressed in the study were the sources of incomes of Nebraska Native Americans and the kind and amount of debts owed by Nebraska Native Americans. Regarding the sources of income, it was learned that although Nebraska Indians receive income from a wide variety of sources, the major source of their income is wages and salaries. In terms of the debts that they owed, it was discovered that less than a fourth of the respondents have debts with either a bank or a finance company. At $2,624 and $1,959, respectively, the average bank and finance company debts both are fairly low. This can probably be attributed to the fact that Native Americans often find it difficult to obtain credit.

HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

Background interviews with Native American spokespersons and state agency representatives suggested that improved health care is an important need of the Nebraska Indian population. The general state of Native Americans' health, as well as the quality of the health care available to them, were characterized by these sources as poor. Alcoholism, in particular, was described as a prevalent health problem, and improved alcohol treatment centers were said to be a definite need. For Indians living in the Panhandle, the inavailability of local health care and the lack of transportation to medical clinics on Indian reservations were said to be critical problems.

These beliefs were at least partially confirmed by the survey data. When asked to describe the state of their health, Nebraska Native Americans on the average described their health as good, although they were more likely than other Americans to characterize it as either fair or poor. Likewise, other Americans were more likely to report that they were in excellent or good health. Furthermore, while Nebraska Indians were not found to be prone to a large number of accidents, they were found to be relatively susceptible to both temporary illnesses and ongoing health problems. Drinking problems were reported in 21 percent of the households surveyed. In addition, more than one-third of the respondents who had been arrested indicated that their arrest was alcohol-related. Although strictly comparable data for all Nebraskans are not available, an examination of the admittance data from alcohol treatment centers in the state sheds some light on the problem. During fiscal year 1978, Native Americans represented the second highest group of admissions (behind whites), accounting for 9.1 percent of the total. According to the population estimate, Native Americans in Nebraska represent slightly less than one percent of the total population in the state.

Selected health characteristics of Nebraska Indians and Nebraskans are compared in Table 4.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF THE HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS
OF NEBRASKA INDIANS AND NEBRASKANS

Characteristic	Nebraska Indians	Nebraskans*
Percent Sick	21% (past month)	15% (past 2 wks.)
If yes, mean number of days sick	9.4	5.1
Percent with accidents or injuries	6%	4%
Percent with health problems, illnesses	26	26
Percent who talked to doctor about problem illness	59	77
Percent who usually see same doctor	54	89
Mean Number of days to get an appointment	11.8	4.8
Number minutes wait for doctor		
0-30	59%	66%
31-60	22	23
61-90	3	3
Over 90	16	8

*Source: 1978 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In all, it appears that while there are few significant differences between the two groups in terms of their illness and accident rates, there are differences in terms of the delivery of the health care services they receive. As shown in Table 4, nearly equal percentages of Nebraska

Indians and Nebraskans reported a recent accident or injury or that they suffered from an ongoing health problem or illness. Furthermore, while 21 percent of the Nebraska Indians and only 15 percent of the Nebraskans reported that they had been sick recently, these differences probably can be attributed in part to the fact that the questions asked of each group were not comparable: Nebraska Indians were asked if they had been sick during the *month* preceding the interview and Nebraskans were asked if they had been ill during the *two weeks* before the interview. Those Nebraska Indians who were sick, however, were sick longer on the average than other Nebraskans.

Despite the fact that they are sick or injured at about the same rate as other Nebraskans, Nebraska Indians are less likely than other Nebraskans to consult a doctor about their illnesses or to see the same doctor on repeat visits. Seventy-seven percent of the Nebraska respondents, and only 59 percent of the Indian respondents, reported that they had talked to a doctor about their current health problem; similarly, 89 percent of the Nebraskans, and only 54 percent of the Native Americans, said that they usually see the same doctor. In addition, it reportedly takes Nebraska Indians over twice as long as other Nebraskans to get an appointment with a doctor, and they generally have to wait longer to see the doctor once they arrive at the office.

Comparison of the health characteristics of Nebraska Indians with those of other Nebraskans revealed that Nebraska Native Americans are not sick or injured more often than non-Native Americans. They are, however, less likely than non-Indians to talk to a doctor about their illnesses, and they appear to receive a lower standard of health care service than other Nebraskans. Overall the data suggest the existence of several unmet needs in the areas of health and health care.

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

The background interviews with Native American spokespersons and state agency officials suggested the existence of many educational problems among Nebraska Indians. These included a high incidence of absenteeism and dropping out; poor educational achievement, shortage of positive role models for Indian children; and a lack of Indian studies in the public school curriculum. Many of the background sources were critical of government at the local, state and federal levels for contributing to the problems found in the educational systems. These problems were said to stem from inconsistency in the amount of funding allocated to Indian education, from a low property-tax base on the reservations, and from lack of communication and involvement between Indian communities and local school boards.

In terms of the educational characteristics of Nebraska Indians, it was learned from the survey that the American Indians interviewed for this study both value and are concerned about the quality of education. However, over half (51 percent) of these native Americans do not have high school diplomas. Furthermore, this problem was found to be particularly acute in the small town/rural areas of the state, where 56 percent of the Indians are lacking high school diplomas.

It was also discovered that Nebraska Native Americans perceive the existence of educational obstacles for their children, and tend to believe that these obstacles result from problems or weaknesses within the schools and school system. While they say that their children have few serious school-related problems, they are very critical of the schools in their neighborhoods. A majority of the respondents identified the lack of Indian teachers and administrators and the fact that most teachers do not understand the Indian culture as very serious problems for the schools in their neighborhoods. A lack of career guidance, as well as the presence of alcohol and drugs in the schools also were seen as serious problems.

As shown in Table 5, Nebraska Indians are less likely than other Nebraskans to have their high school diplomas. Forty-nine percent of the Native Americans interviewed for this study, compared to 70 percent of all Nebraskans, are high school graduates.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF THE EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NEBRASKA INDIANS, NORTH CENTRAL INDIANS, AND NEBRASKANS

Characteristic	Nebraska Indians	Nebraskans[b]
Percent High School Graduates	49%[a]	70%
Percent Who Are Satisfied with Their Own Educations	59%	69%

[a] Figure does not include respondents with a General Educational Development (GED) Certificate.

[b] Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, "Money Income and Poverty Status in 1975 of Families and Persons in the United States and North Central Region" (Spring 1976 and Persons in the United States and North Central Region" (Spring 1976 Survey of Income and Education), *Current Population Report*, Series P-60, No. 111, April 1978.

In addition to being less educated, Nebraska Indians also report being less satisfied with their education than other Nebraskans; whereas 69 percent of all Nebraskans have expressed satisfaction with their education, only 59 percent of the Nebraska Indians interviewed for

this needs assessment were satisfied. This finding may reflect the lower level of educational attainment among Native Americans.

The problems encountered by Indians in higher education are similar to those found for students in elementary and secondary schools, but, the background sources noted, they are aggravated by the usual difficulties of being away from home for the first time. Historically, few Indian youth have attended college; however, the number of Nebraska Indians attending colleges and universities is on the rise. A primary reason for this is the recent establishment at Winnebago of a satellite campus of the Nebraska Technical Community College of Norfolk. Presently 56 students from Macy and 54 from Santee are enrolled at the college. In addition, one source estimated that over 100 Indian students were enrolled at the University in Lincoln. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, one source said the enrollment increased to 30 students when a part-time Indian advisor was added to the staff.

It does appear that relative to other Nebraskans, Nebraska Indians are both somewhat less educated and somewhat less satisfied with their education. In addition, Native American parents are particularly concerned about the lack of Indian teachers and administrators in their children's schools and about the teachers' lack of understanding of the Indian culture. As one background source noted, the greatest need in Indian education lies in "reinforcing the Native American cultural background by Indian people working with Indian kids."

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

Native American spokespersons and state agency representatives interviewed for this study indicated that Nebraska Indians throughout the State face serious housing problems. Several sources said that Indians generally live in the poorest areas of the cities and in the worst housing available. Overcrowding, lack of adequate sanitation facilities, and poor maintenance were cited as "critical" problems.

During the background interviews it was also noted that government subsidized units had been developed on the reservations, but that these units had not been designed to suit the Indian people. The culturally-held belief in the extended family dictates that homes should be large enough to accommodate at least seven to ten persons. At Santee, in spite of a housing shortage, the background sources noted that a new multi-unit building for the elderly remains only partially occupied. Again, the extended family concept makes these units unattractive to those they were designed to serve.

Assessment of the housing characteristics of Nebraska Native Americans focused on obtaining information about the types and conditions of the houses they live in as well as their feeling towards their neighborhoods. As suggested by the background interviews, homeownership among Nebraska Indians is low; only 25 percent of the Indians in the sample own or were buying their homes. In contrast, in 1975 the homeownership rate for all Nebraskans was 67.2 percent.

The data on all Nebraska Indian homeowners indicate that slightly more than half (54 percent) reported owning their homes outright, and slightly less than half (46 percent) said they are still paying off their mortgages. The average house payment for respondents who were buying their homes was $150. Finally, it is interesting to note that 42 percent of the homeowners purchased their homes within the past four years, and that 70 percent purchased them within the past eight years.

Overall, most Nebraskan Indians who rent live in houses or apartments which are privately-owned; less than one-fourth live in publicly-owned housing units. However, this is not true of reservation renters; more than three-fourths of these respondents live in government-subsidized homes. Indians living in the urban and small town/rural areas of the State, in other words, tend to rent privately-owned houses and apartments, while those living on the reservations tend to rent government-subsidized units.

The average monthly rent paid by Nebraska Indians is $121; water services and garbage collection generally are included in the rent (in three instances out of four), but electricity and gas are included in only 60 and 55 percent of the cases. Reservation renters generally pay the lowest rents, while urban residents pay the highest rents.

The homes and apartments which Nebraska Indians live in are fairly small—the average unit has 4.6 rooms (not counting bathrooms or hallways), and one-fourth of the units have from one to three rooms. Because the average household size of Nebraska Native Americans is relatively large while the average size of their dwelling units is fairly small, it was concluded that many Nebraska Indian homes are typically more crowded than other Nebraskans' homes.

Responses to a question on housing problems revealed that Nebraska Indians have had both structural and maintenance problems with their homes. Items which were most frequently cited as problems included: window-related maintenance problems, insects or rodents, inter-

ior and exterior paint, worn tile or carpet and faulty plumbing. As might be expected, homeowners generally reported fewer housing problems than renters.

The findings with respect to the housing attitudes of Nebraska Native Americans were somewhat difficult to interpret. While respondents indicated that they have had numerous structural and maintenance problems with their houses (particularly window-related maintenance problems), they also said that they thought their homes are well kept and are satisfied with them as places to live.

POLITICAL/LEGAL PARTICIPATION

Although not explicitly required by LB 532, an effort was extended in the interviews to determine whether or not Nebraska Indians felt that their political/legal needs were being met. Interviewees suggested that these needs were, in fact, their least important. This is not surprising given the obvious, almost causal, relationship between the other needs areas and the perception of leading a good and full life. A portion of the data collected for this topic is, however, or some importance.

Certainly, the most telling information collected during the interview process was the fact that more than one-third (36 percent) of all the respondents had been arrested. Most commonly their arrest was based on an alcohol-related offense—20 percent for public drunkenness and 19 percent for driving while intoxicated. While it is not possible, given the state of national criminal justice system records to compare this data to the nation as a whole, this incidence of alcohol-related arrests suggests a problem of serious dimension.

An attempt was made to ascertain the degree to which Native Americans in the State participated in the political process and the degree to which they felt their participation had effected the outcome of issues. Again, the information collected cannot be compared to either national or statewide attitudes. Generally speaking, most Nebraska Indians do not feel that the political process or public officials are responsive to their needs and desires. Illustrative of this attitude was the affirmative response of 80 percent of the interviewees to the statement "Public officials don't care what people like me think." Still, it seems worthy of note that 51 percent of those interviewed had voted in a state election and 27 percent in a national one.

NEBRASKA INDIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR NEEDS

The Nebraska Indians surveyed for this study were asked to prioritize their needs in the areas of education, employment, health, housing and political/legal participation. Specifically, they were asked to rank the needs of their families in these areas from most important to least important. These results are shown in Table 6. Education and health were perceived to be their most important needs by most Nebraska Indians; education was judged to be their most important need by 36 percent of the respondents, and health was judged by 34 percent to be most important. Employment and health were judged to be less important areas of need than either education and health, and political/legal participation was felt to be the least important of the five areas.

TABLE 6

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Percent Who Said Need Was:	AREA OF NEED				
	Education	Health	Employment	Housing	Political/ Legal
Most Important	36%	34%	19%	12%	2%
2nd Most Important	22	30	32	22	5
3rd Most Important	17	21	26	24	7
4th Most Important	18	20	15	32	10
5th Most Important	4	2	5	7	73
Equally Important	3	3	3	3	3
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

To obtain additional information about Nebraska Indians' perceptions of their needs, respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the needs of *Indian people* in each of the five areas were being well met, being met in an adequate way, or being met very inadequately. As the data in Table 7 reveal, it is reasonable to conclude that Nebraska Native Americans believe that the needs of their people are not being satisfied. Forty-six percent of the respondents reported that they believe that the educational needs of the Indian people were not being met adequately; nearly half of the respondents, in other words, believe that their most important need is not being met in a satisfactory way. The findings are similar with respect to the other areas of need. Forty-one percent of the respondents felt that the health needs of the Indian people were not being met adequately; and 60 percent felt that the employment needs, 65 percent that the housing needs, and 66 percent that the political/legal needs of the Indian people were not being satisfied.

TABLE 7

DEGREE TO WHICH NEEDS ARE BEING MET

Percent Who Said Needs of Indian People Were:	Education	Health	Employment	Housing	Political/ Legal
Being well met	8%	8%	4%	3%	2%
Being met adequately	46	51	36	32	32
Not being met very well	27	24	35	36	27
Being very inadequately met	19	17	25	29	38
TOTAL					

Although the Nebraska Indians interviewed for this study were more-or-less satisfied with various aspects of their lives, including their education, their jobs, their health care, and their homes, they felt the needs of the Indian people in these and other areas are not being satisfied. It appears, in other words, that the Native Americans interviewed for this study were fairly satisfied with their own lives, but nonetheless feel the situation of the Nebraska Indian people in general is unsatisfactory.